

More Freeways?!!!

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

May, 2002

Published to inform the community about the SEWRPC Plan to grow freeways in Milwaukee

Major freeway expansion project on the table for Southeastern Wisconsin

It's a freeway building plan that could:

- Cost more than 6.2 billion dollars...
- Use more than 658 acres of additional land – including wetlands...
- Mean the loss of 216 homes...
- Eliminate 31 businesses...
- Create more urban sprawl...
- and weaken Milwaukee's economy.

All this to save only minutes of travel time – five minutes of travel time, to be specific, between the Zoo and Marquette Interchanges at peak hours.

This road expansion plan does not emphasize enhanced use of buses, car-pools, trains or bicycles. It only calls for more roads for projected increases in vehicle traffic.

It doesn't study land use, economic development, job creation or preservation of neighborhoods. If we're spending \$6.2 billion, why wouldn't we want a comprehensive plan that makes smart choices for our future?

Who is SEWRPC?

SEWRPC is the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. It was established in 1960 by the State as the planning agency for the seven counties of Kenosha, Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Racine, Walworth, Washington, and Waukesha. SEWRPC's operations are funded through our Federal, State and local taxes.

What we need is a transportation system that will:

- Create family supporting jobs instead of urban sprawl.
- Foster smart growth development instead of gridlock, road rage and smog.
- Protect our precious green spaces, rivers, lakes and family farms.
- Include all modes of travel including efficient mass transit to enable all people to gain access to good jobs and services.
- Maximize the time we can spend with our families by reducing commute times and road rage.

And —

- Protect us from 30-years of huge tax increases.

It's time to speak out for what's best for our future. Get involved. Local public meetings on this plan run from May 22 through June 5. See details on back page.



How it began. Again

Wisconsin's Department of **TRANSPORTATION** (WisDOT) commissioned the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC) to undertake a "Regional **FREEWAY** System Reconstruction Study." The study looks **ONLY** at the reconstruction of the existing freeway system. A brief mention is made of the need to upgrade other transportation options. There is no discussion of new freeway construction in any outlying suburban areas. Nor are the economic impacts (positive or negative) of the various alternatives discussed.

This study is needed, according to WisDOT, because much of the freeway system in southeast Wisconsin was built in the 1960s and 1970s and is nearing the end of its design life.

SEWRPC's study team came up with four options, including simply replacing the existing system in-kind. Replacing in-kind would carry a price tag of \$3.4 billion and require no additional right-of-way.

All of the other options include the condemnation and acquisition of hundreds of acres of land, hundreds of homes and dozens of businesses. Most of this property earmarked for removal from productive use (and the tax roles) would be taken from Milwaukee County.

Above: Miss Concrete and Miss Asphalt help cut the ribbon opening a new section of freeway. During Milwaukee's first encounter with freeway building, the County lost 3,542 acres.

A preferred plan has already been selected, before public input

SEWRPC'S Advisory Committee made a preliminary recommendation in December 2001 for an alternative plan that called for the reconstruction of 270 miles of freeway, including sections of Interstate Highways 43 and 94, and Wisconsin Highways 894 and 45. (See map)

With this plan, the state would be building enough new roadway to create an entirely new 127-mile, two-lane freeway – for 6.2 billion dollars!

Plan calls for more lanes

In Milwaukee County, the expansion would call for widening of existing roadways from the six lanes we currently use (such as on I-94 near the

stadium, with its three lanes in each direction) to a total of eight lanes. That would mean an additional lane on each side of 94. It would also mean an elevated, overlapped section of freeway just west of Miller Park.

And double—decking

This design would mean a 25-foot concrete and steel overlap to the east-bound lanes and the graves to the north between Mitchell and Hawley Roads. They'd have to do this with, or without, adding lanes.

Milwaukee's Story Hill Neighborhood Association, whose properties overlook this freeway section, is "strongly opposed" to double-decking, not only

for the proposed removal of homes, the threat to the environment, but also for the "disruption and removal of graves from nearby cemeteries, such as Wood National, Anshai Lebowitz, Spring Hill and Calvary."

The cost will be huge

The preliminary plan calls for work to be done in segments over 30 years' time, with the estimated overall cost at 6.2 billion dollars, or \$208 million annually over 30 years.

But where will the money come from? The State of Wisconsin still has a \$500 million deficit for the Marquette Interchange Project set to begin in 2004. And the State can't tell us how that project is going to be paid for!

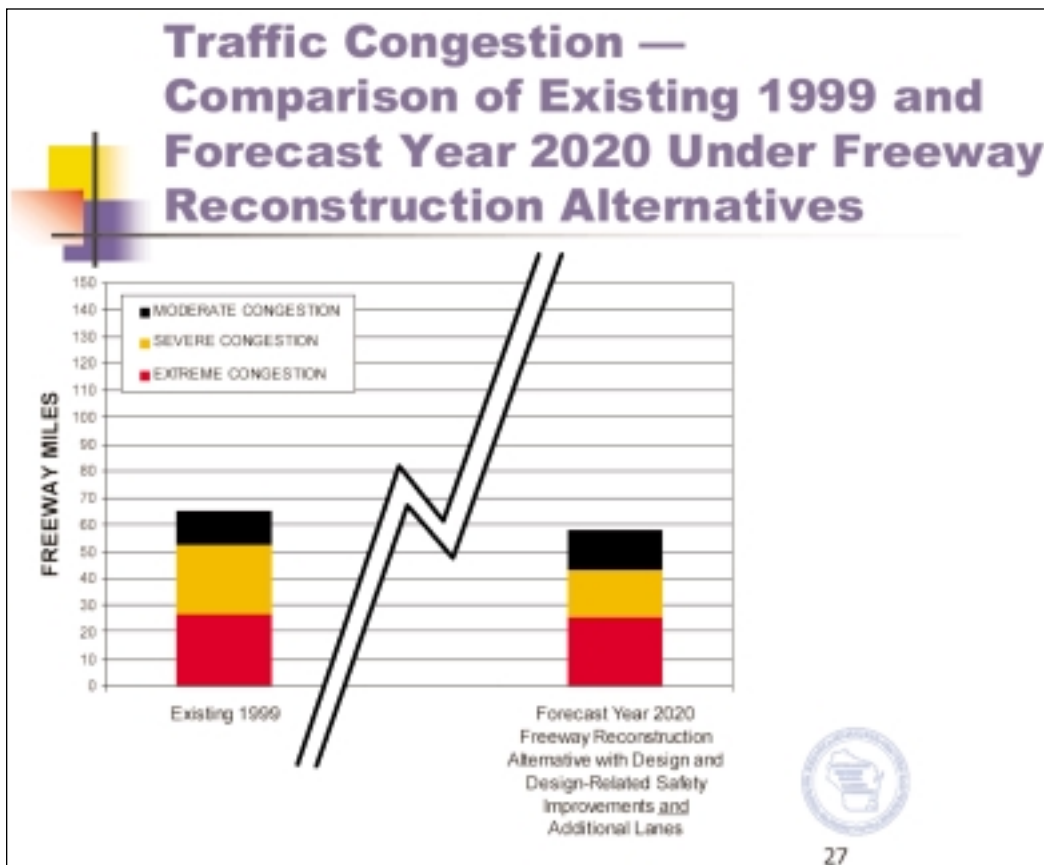
But not everyone agreed

The decision to approve SEWRPC's preliminary freeway expansion plan was not unanimous. Milwaukee Mayor John O. Norquist voted no, noting a "breathtaking lack of vision." The Wisconsin DNR opposed widening the roadway system except for the most congested segments.

The vote on the preliminary plan was taken during interim Milwaukee County Executive Janine Geske's time in office, and Geske abstained. Concerns were expressed by: Milwaukee County Board Chairwoman Karen Ordinans, Wauwatosa Mayor Teresa Estness, and Tim Sheehy, President of the

Milwaukee Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce.

State Rep. Peter Bock and Milwaukee Alderman Michael Murphy also attended to express their opposition to widening the freeway through their districts.



LEFT: SEWRPC's own chart shows that \$6.2 billion, eight lanes and 18 years later, "congestion" levels will be nearly identical to those of 1999.

According to SEWRPC, "congestion" is:

Moderate if characterized by speeds of 1 to 5 miles per hour below free-flow speed.

Severe if characterized by speeds of 5 to 15 mph below free-flow speed.

Extreme if traffic is stop-and-go and moving at 20 to 30 miles per hour.

Freeway Expansion Public Meetings

Attend — and Speak Out!

All meetings below are organized by SEWRPC and begin at 4:00 p.m. Between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.: open-house format, at which time you can talk in small groups or one-on-one with study staff. At 6:00 p.m. staff will give a presentation, followed by a public hearing at 6:30 p.m. in which there is a forum for public comment.

May 22, 2002	Downtown Transit Center, Harbor Lights Room 909 E. Michigan Street, Milwaukee
May 29, 2002	Martin Luther King Community Center 1531 W. Vliet Street, Milwaukee
May 30, 2002	Northwest Senior Center 7717 W. Good Hope Road, Milwaukee
June 5, 2002	Manitoba Elementary School Gymnasium 4040 W. Forest Home Avenue, Milwaukee

How do I contact SEWRPC?

Write to: SEWRPC PO Box 1607 Waukesha, WI 53187-1607	E-mail: Freewaystudy@sewrpc.org Fax: (262) 547-1103
---	---

Write or call your City, County and State elected officials.

Tell them you oppose SEWRPC's freeway expansion plan. Tell them you want transportation planning that respects and enhances neighborhoods and business districts, and respects the environment.



ABOVE: Photo taken in 2000 shows the lack of available land from Miller Park to Hawley road on which to build new freeway lanes. SEWRPC's "solution" is to double-deck the freeway in this area. The west bound lanes would be raised 25 feet in the air (affecting the quality of life in the Story Hill neighborhood) and overlap cemetery land by as much as 25 feet (putting hundreds at eternal rest in eternal shadow as well).

Speak out before it's too late

SEWRPC is now beginning to solicit public input on its freeway expansion plan. A total of ten public meetings have been scheduled (See back page for dates and times).

Despite the fundamentally flawed manner in which this planning process was developed, we encourage everyone to attend these meetings. Ideally, the public should have been involved in a more meaningful way at the beginning of the planning process. Doing so would have allowed the public to help design the alternatives.

What can I do?

Go to a public hearing or write to SEWRPC with your ideas for a balanced transportation system that will maximize our region's economic potential.

Tell SEWRPC that adding lanes to Milwaukee's freeways will:

- Increase urban sprawl hurting our area's economy and environment

- Require tax increases without significantly reducing travel times and traffic congestion
- Hurt Milwaukee neighborhoods with noise and demolition
- Take dollars away from other important modes of transportation
- Increase heavy truck traffic on freeways that don't serve our region

What's next?

SEWRPC will select its alternative based on public input and submit its recommendation to WisDOT before the fall 2002 state elections.

Milwaukee Common Council says NO to freeway expansion

Additional information on the preliminary recommended plan is available on the Web at www.sewrpc.org

In a resolution passed almost unanimously in April 2002, Milwaukee Aldermen agreed that none of the alternatives presented by SEWRPC addresses the needs of the City of Milwaukee.

The Council supported a modified plan with "design and design related" safety improvements — but stated it will not back adding lanes in affected areas when there is only minimal reduction in travel time. It specifically stated no support for double-decking of I-94 from Miller Park to Hawley Road, because of the negative impact on the Story Hill Neighborhood.

There's more information on the Web on smart growth, congestion and transportation.

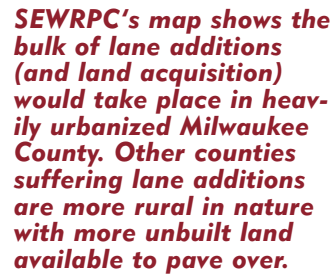
1000 Friends of Wisconsin and the Land Use Institute:

www.1000friendsofwisconsin.com

Surface Transportation Policy Project:

www.transact.org

LEFT:



Note also that counties suffering little or no impact from this freeway building plan have an equal vote in the plan's adoption.

Sierra Club's senior Midwest representative, quoted in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, May 1, 2002.